# Wisdom - Sophia

**But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- Psalm 1:2-3+**

**Spiritual wisdom** is godly wisdom which contrasts with worldly wisdom. Study the passage in James below and make a list of the contrasts in. Do the same for 1 Cor 1:1-31, 1 Cor 2:1-16. Godly wisdom is God's character in the many practical affairs of life. In other words godly wisdom involves living life in the light of the revelation of God's Will in His Word and applying this knowledge to specific situations. Biblical wisdom is definable as skill for living. God's plan to redeem us destroyed the wisdom of the worldly wise men (1 Cor 1:19). In fact, human wisdom never could comprehend God's plan for salvation (1 Cor 1:21). Paul was not bound by the limits of human wisdom because the Holy Spirit conveyed spiritual wisdom through him (1 Cor 2:13). Human wisdom is totally inadequate to accept God's salvation (1 Cor 3:18,19).

> Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:13-18+ )
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> We can get INFORMATION "on LINE" (from Google)
> but WISDOM is from "on HIGH" (from God)!

**Spiritual wisdom** is given only by the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, Solomon exemplified this wisdom (Mt 12:42+). When Jesus came, His wisdom also outshone the wisdom of the wisest among men (Mt 13:54+). This wisdom was seen in the Lord Jesus, even when He was a small Boy (Luke 2:40,52+). When leaders became necessary in the Jerusalem church, the apostles set about to select men who possessed this spiritual wisdom (Acts 6:3+).

**Wisdom** is the insight into the true nature of things. Knowledge is the mental possession of powers of perceiving objects,**wisdom** is the power of right reasoning concerning them and forming right decisions accordingly. It is the ability to make the right choices at the opportune time. The consistency of making the right choice is an indication of one's spiritual maturity. The prerequisite for this "**wisdom**" is the fear of the Lord (Pr 1:7+).

**Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

**Wisdom** is the art of being successful, of forming the correct plan to gain the desired results. Its seat is the heart, the centre of moral and intellectual decision

**On this page:**


- Quotes
- Devotionals


**Wisdom** (4678)(**sophia**, compare saphes = clear) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

> **Sophia** is used 6x in Colossians - Col 1:9, 28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; 4:5 (clearly it is a**key word**)
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> **Sophia** - 51x in 49v - Mt 11:19; 12:42; 13:54; Mk 6:2; Lk 2:40, 52; 7:35; 11:31, 49; 21:15; Acts 6:3, 10; 7:10, 22; Ro 11:33; 1Cor 1:17, 19ff, 24, 30; 2:1, 4ff, 13; 3:19; 12:8; 2Cor 1:12; Eph 1:8, 17; 3:10; Col 1:9, 28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; 4:5; Jas 1:5; 3:13, 15, 17; 2 Pet 3:15; Rev 5:12; 7:12; 13:18; 17:9 **NAS** = cleverness, 1; learning, 1; wisdom, 49.

**Faith** (pistis) and **wisdom** (sophia) occur together in Acts 6:3-5, 8-10; 1Cor 2:4-7; Eph 1:15-17, Eph 3:10-12; Col 2:3-5, Col 3:16,17; James 1:3-5. **Wisdom** ("God's clarity" or "God-revealed clarity") conveys the Lord's solution for problem-solving. In other words, sophia manifests God's persuasion about solving problems or challenges by applying His solutions. Like faith, wisdom is always given by the Lord and reveals how to please Him in a particular situation. In short, this is real clarity! Ultimately all true spiritual wisdom resides in Christ, the Personification of perfect wisdom (1 Cor 1:30).

**Trench's synonyms** (sophia, phronesis, gnosis, epignosis) **-** In Scripture **sophia** is ascribed only to God or to good men, though it is used in an ironic sense by adding "of this world" (1 Cor 1:20), "of this age" (1 Cor 2:6), or similar words (2 Cor 1:12). None of the children of this world are called sophoi without this tacit or expressed irony (Lk 10:21+). They are never more than those "professing to be wise" (Ro 1:22+). If sophia includes striving after the best ends as well as using the best means mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense then wisdom cannot be separated from goodness. (Wisdom - Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament)

> **Sophia** - 138x in the **Septuagint** - Ex 31:3; 35:26, 31, 33, 35; 36:1f; Deut 4:6; 2 Sam 14:20; 20:22; 1Kgs 2:6, 35; 3:1; 4:29; 5:12; 1Chr 22:12; 28:21; 2Chr 1:10ff; 9:3, 5ff, 22f; Ezra 7:25; Job 4:21; 11:6; 12:2, 12f; 13:5; 15:8; 26:3; 28:12, 18, 20, 28; 32:7, 13; 33:33; 38:36f; 39:17; Ps 37:30; 49:3; 51:6; 90:12; 104:24; 107:27; 111:10; Pr 1:2, 7, 20, 29; 2:2f, 6, 10; 3:5, 13, 19; 4:11; 5:1; 6:8; 7:4; 8:1, 11f; 9:1, 10; 10:13, 23, 31; 11:2; 14:6, 8, 33; 15:33; 16:16; 17:16, 28; 18:2; 20:29; 21:30; 22:4; 24:3, 7, 14; 28:26; 29:3, 15; 30:3; 31:5; Eccl 1:13, 16ff; 2:3, 9, 12f, 21, 26; 7:10ff, 19, 23, 25; 8:1, 16; 9:10, 13, 15f, 18; 10:1, 10; Isa 10:13; 11:2; 29:14; 33:6; Jer 8:9; 9:23; 10:12; 49:7; 51:15; Dan 1:4, 17, 20; 2:20f, 23, 30; 5:14

**Thayer** makes an excellent point that **wisdom** is "used of the knowledge of very diverse matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context in every particular case."

**Sophia** emphasizes understanding of ultimate things—such as life and death, God and man, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time.

**Sophia** is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-129).

**Sophia** is used frequently in the New Testament to describe the ability to discern and conform to God's will.

**Charles Simeon** - True wisdom is the gift of God—Even earthly wisdom must in reality be traced to God as its author. The persons who formed the tabernacle and all its vessels derived all their skill from God: and even those who move in a sphere which may be supposed to be suited to the meanest capacity, and spend their lives in the common pursuits of agriculture, can no farther approve themselves skilful in their work, than they are instructed by God Himself (Is 28:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29). But spiritual wisdom is still farther out of the reach of unassisted reason, because it is conversant about things "which no human eye has seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived, and which can only be revealed by the Spirit of God." (1Co 2:9, 10, 11, 12) It is emphatically "a wisdom which is from above," (Jas 3:17) and which can "come only from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (Jas 1:17-note with Mt 16:17) The Spirit of God, whose office it is to impart it unto men, is called "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;"(Is 11:2-note) and to him are we directed "to open the eyes of our understanding," (Ep 1:18-note) and to "guide us into all truth:" since it is only by the unction derived from him, that we can possibly attain a spiritual discernment. (James 1 - Charles Simeon - The Way to Obtain True Wisdom)

**Salmond** - "**Sophia** is the collective moral intelligence, 'insight into the true nature of things' (Lightfoot) and in the Pauline Epistles it is this intelligence in especial as knowledge of the divine plan of salvation long hidden and now revealed; while **phronēsis** is the practical use of wisdom, the product of wisdom, 'the right use and application of the **phrēn** (the mind)' (Trench), the faculty of discerning the proper disposition or action. The riches, the abounding riches, of the grace expended on us stood revealed in the bestowal of these gifts of spiritual discernment with reference to the deep things of the divine counsel and the divine revelation " (Expositor's Bible Commentary - Salmond)

**William Barclay** - see his discussion of **wisdom** (Topic "The Wrong Kind of Wisdom" and "True Wisdom" -James 3 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible). Other comments on wisdom by Barclay…

> **Col 2:3 Wisdom** is **sophia** (Greek #4678) and knowledge is gnosis (Greek #1108). These two words do not simply repeat each other; there is a difference between them. Gnosis (Greek #1108) is the power, almost intuitive and instinctive, to grasp the truth when we see it and hear it. But sophia (Greek #4678) is the power to confirm and to commend the truth with wise and intelligent argument, once it has been intuitively grasped. Gnosis (Greek #1108) is that by which a man grasps the truth; sophia (Greek #4678) is that by which a man is enabled to give a reason for the hope that is in him.
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> **1Cor 12 (God's Differing Gifts)** The Greek word we have translated wisdom is **sophia** (Greek #4678). It is defined by Clement of Alexandria as "the knowledge of things human and divine and of their causes." Aristotle described it as "striving after the best ends and using the best means." This is the highest kind of wisdom; it comes not so much from thought as from communion with God. It is the wisdom which knows God. Knowledge--the Greek word is gnosis (Greek #1108)--is a much more practical thing. It is the knowledge which knows what to do in any given situation. It is the practical application to human life and affairs of sophia (Greek #4678). The two things are necessary--the wisdom which knows by communion with God the deep

things of God, and the knowledge which, in the daily life of the world and the Church, can put that wisdom into practice.

Ephesians 1 - There is wisdom and sound sense. The two words in Greek are **sophia** (Greek #4678) and **phronesis** (Greek #5428), and Christ brought both of them to us. This is very interesting. The Greeks wrote much about these two words; if a man had both, he was perfectly equipped for life. Aristotle defined **sophia** (Greek #4678) as knowledge of the most precious things. Cicero defined it as knowledge of things both human and divine. Sophia (Greek #4678) was a thing of the searching intellect. **Sophia** (Greek #4678) was the answer to the eternal problems of life and death, and God and man, and time and eternity. Aristotle defined **phronesis** (Greek #5428) as the knowledge of human affairs and of the things in which planning is necessary. Plutarch defined it as practical knowledge of the things which concern us. Cicero defined it as knowledge of the things which are to be sought and the things which are to be avoided. Plato defined it as the disposition of mind which enables us to judge what things are to be done and what things are not to be done. In other words, phronesis (Greek #5428) is the sound sense which enables men to meet and to solve the practical problems of everyday life and living. It is Paul's claim that Jesus brought us **sophia** (Greek #4678), the intellectual knowledge which satisfies the mind, and phronesis (Greek #5428), the practical knowledge which enables us to handle the day to day problems of practical life and living. There is a certain completeness in the Christian character. There is a type of person who is at home in the study, who moves familiarly amidst the theological and philosophical problems, and who is yet helpless and impractical in the ordinary everyday affairs of life. There is another kind of person who claims that he is a practical man, so engaged with the business of living that he has no time to concern himself with the ultimate things. In the light of the gifts of God through Christ, both of these characters are imperfect. Christ brings to us the solution of the problems both of eternity and time.

**Marvin Vincent** on **Sophos** and **Sophia**

**Sophia** is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense.

1Cor 1:19 **Wisdom** - **prudence** (σοφίαν - σύνεσιν ) The two words are often found together, as Exodus 31:3; Deuteronomy 4:6; Colossians 1:9. Compare σοφοι και συνετοί wiseand prudent, Matthew 11:25. For the distinction, see, as to σοφία wisdomon Romans 11:33; as to σύνεσις prudenceon Mark 12:33; Luke 2:47. Wisdom is the more general; mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense. Prudence is the special application of wisdom; its critical adjustment to particular cases.

Eph 3:10 **Manifold wisdom** (πολυποίκιλος σοφία) A very striking phrase. The adjective occurs only here, and means variegated. It is applied to pictures, flowers, garments. Ποίκιλον (poikilon) is used in the Septuagint of Joseph's coat, Genesis 37:3. Through the Church God's wisdom in its infinite variety is to be displayed - the many-tinted wisdom of God - in different modes of power, different characters, methods of training, providences, forms of organization, etc.

James 3:13 - In the New Testament **sophos** is used -

1. In the original classical sense, skilled in handicraft (1Corinthians 3:10).

2. Accomplished in letters, learned (Romans 1:14, Romans 1:22; 1Corinthians 1:19, 1 Corinthians 1:26; 1 Corinthians 3:18). So of the Jewish theologians and doctors (Matthew 11:25), and of Christian teachers (Matthew 23:34).

3. In a practical sense, of the practice of the law of piety and honesty; so Ephesians 5:15, where it is joined with walking circumspectly, and 1 Corinthians 6:5, where it is represented as the quality adapted to adjust differences in the church.

4. In the higher, philosophical sense, of devising the best counsels and employing the best means to carry them out. So of God, Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; Judges 1:25; 1 Corinthians 1:25. In this passage (James 3:13) the word appears to be used in the sense of 3: practical wisdom in pious living. "Knowledge is proud that she has learned so much, Wisdom is humble that she knows no more."

Ro 11:33 - **Wisdom** - **knowledge** (σοφίας - γνώσεως) Used together only here, 1Corinthians 12:8; Colossians 2:3. There is much difference of opinion as to the precise distinction. It is agreed on all hands that wisdom is the nobler attribute, being bound up with moral character as knowledge is not. Hence wisdom is ascribed in scripture only to God or to good men, unless it is used ironically. See 1Corinthians 1:20; 1Corinthians 2:6; Luke 10:21. Cicero calls **wisdom** "the chief of all virtues." The earlier distinction, as Augustine, is unsatisfactory: that wisdom is concerned with eternal things, and knowledge with things of sense; for gnosis

> knowledge is described as having for its object God (2Corinthians 10:5); the glory of God in the face of Christ (2Corinthians 4:6); Christ Jesus (Philemon 3:8). As applied to human acquaintance with divine things, gnosis knowledge is the lower, sophia wisdom the higher stage. Knowledge may issue in self-conceit. It is wisdom that builds up the man (1Corinthians 8:1). As attributes of God, the distinction appears to be between general and special: the wisdom of God ruling everything in the best way for the best end; the knowledge of God, His wisdom as it contemplates the relations of things, and adopts means and methods. The wisdom forms the plan; the knowledge knows the ways of carrying it out.

**Bullock** - In the Old Testament wisdom at one level describes skilled arts and artisans, like weavers (Exodus 35:25-26 ), architects (Exodus 35:30-36:1 ), and goldsmiths (Jeremiah 10:9 ). At a second level, wisdom was keen insight into life and ways of dealing with its problems. Solomon was associated with wisdom in this sense (1 Kings 3:1-15 ; see also 1 Kings 4:32-34 ), although the term used was "understanding, " which occurs often as a synonym of wisdom. At a fourth level, the terms "wisdom" and "wise" apply to men and women who represent a way of thinking and conduct that is orderly, socially sensitive, and morally upright. Thus, the major thrust of wisdom in the Old Testament was a code of moral conduct. This is especially represented by the Book of Proverbs, which gives instruction on personal behavior from the discipline of children (Pr 22:6) to the golden-rule treatment of one's neighbor (Pr 24:29). The goal of wisdom was to build an orderly and functional society that reflected the moral requirements of God as set forth in the law of Moses. (Wisdom - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

**Harry Hunt** - Real Wisdom Is the Fear of God Three basic definitions of wisdom summarize the status of the field of study very well. Note that the first two of these definitions are quite secular in nature while the third is religious. **First**, wisdom is considered by many to be simply the art of learning how to succeed in life. Apparently, ancient persons learned very early that there was an orderliness to the world in which they lived. They also learned that success and happiness came from living in accordance with that orderliness (Proverbs 22:17-24:22). **Second**, wisdom is considered by some to be a philosophical study of the essence of life. Certainly, much of the Books of Job and Ecclesiastes seem to deal with just such existential issues of life (see particularly Job 30:29-31). **Third**, though the other definitions might include this, it seems that the real essence of wisdom is spiritual, for life is more than just living by a set of rules and being rewarded in some physical manner. Undoubtedly, in this sense wisdom comes from God (Proverbs 2:6). Thus, though it will involve observation and instruction, it really begins with God and one's faith in Him as Lord and Savior (Proverbs 1:7; Job 28:28).(Wisdom and Wise Men - Holman Bible Dictionary)

**Charles Buck** - (Wisdom) Denotes a high and refined notion of things, immediately presented to the mind, as it were, by intuition, without the assistance of reasoning. In a moral sense, it signifies the same as prudence, or that knowledge by which we connect the best means with the best ends. Some, however, distinguish **wisdom** from prudence thus: **wisdom** leads us to speak and act what is most proper; prudence prevents our speaking or acting improperly. A wise man employs the most proper means for success; a prudent man the safest means for not being brought into danger. Spiritual wisdom consists in the knowledge and fear of God. It is beautifully described by James, "as pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James 3:17 (Wisdom - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary)

In the time of Homer, **wisdom** was an attribute but in some Greek writings sophia was not infrequently used to describe shrewdness and cunning. To the Greeks sophia was never an action, as saying wise words or doing wise deeds. In fact, in ancient Greece wisdom had a practical aspect, for a "**wise**" carpenter was one who knew his trade well. In Greek culture the College of Seven Sages was distinguished by both wisdom and political discernment. According to Socrates, wisdom was knowing how little one really knew. Aristotle equated wisdom with "philosophy." The Stoics described wisdom as the application of knowledge. In the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament, is used 135 times, and in the first use Jehovah tells Moses that…

> And I have filled him (Bezalel in preparation for the task of fashioning and constructing the tabernacle) with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship" (Exodus 31:3)
>
> **Comment**: Notice how God's work is to be done with God's wisdom and not worldly wisdom

In Deuteronomy **Moses** instructed Israel that they should "keep and do them (statutes and judgments which Jehovah had commanded Moses Israel to carry out in the land they were entering to possess it), for that is your **wisdom** (LXX = sophia) and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise (sophos) and understanding people. (Deut 4:6)

**Wisdom** is sometimes personified, as in the Proverbs as special knowledge, mainly knowledge concerning Jehovah ("Wisdom shouts in the street. She lifts her voice in the square" Pr 1:20). When Solomon prayed for wisdom to rule, "Now God gave Solomon **wisdom** and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore." (1Kings 4:29) And so "so King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and **wisdom**. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his **wisdom**, which God had put in his heart." (2Chronicles 9:22, 23) which is what led the Queen of Sheba to come and see and then declare "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually

and hear your **wisdom**." (2Chronicles 9:7)

In what is considered to be the oldest book in the Bible we read **Job's** thoughts on divine wisdom:

> But where can **wisdom** (LXX = sophia) be found? And where is the place of understanding?… "Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; and the acquisition of **wisdom** (LXX = sophia) is above that of pearls." So what was the source of this valuable resource? "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is **wisdom** (LXX = sophia) and to depart from evil is understanding.' (Job 28:12, 18, 28)

Below are a few examples of verses from **Psalms** (7 uses of sophia) and **Proverbs** (43 uses of sophia, compared with 25 uses in Ecclesiastes) which use **sophia** in the LXX:

> Psalm 37:30 The mouth of the righteous utters **wisdom**, And his tongue speaks justice. (Spurgeon's Note)
>
> Psalm 51:6 - Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know **wisdom**. (Note)
>
> Psalm 90:12 (Moses prays) So teach us to number our days, That we may present to Thee a heart of **wisdom**. (Spurgeon's note)
>
> Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise **wisdom** and instruction.
>
> Proverbs 2:2 Make your ear attentive to **wisdom**, Incline your heart to understanding;
>
> Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD gives **wisdom**; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.
>
> Proverbs 2:10 For **wisdom** will enter your heart, And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
>
> Proverbs 3:13 How blessed is the man who finds **wisdom**, And the man who gains understanding.
>
> Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by **wisdom** founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens
>
> Proverbs 8:11 "For **wisdom** is better than jewels; And all desirable things can not compare with her.
>
> Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.
>
> Proverbs 16:16 How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.
>
> Proverbs 29:3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, But he who keeps company with harlots wastes his wealth.
>
> Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

**Vine** - While **sophia** is the insight into the true nature of things, **phronesis** is the ability to discern modes of action with a view to their results; while **sophia** is theoretical, **phronesis** is practical" (Lightfoot).

Paul sums up spiritual wisdom and knowledge with the truth that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and **knowledge**." (Col 2:3-note, cf 1Cor 1:24, 30)

It is not enough to have knowledge -- one has to have **wisdom** to be able to use that knowledge correctly. Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but **wisdom** enables us to put things together and relate God's truth to daily life.

**Wuest** comments that **wisdom** or **sophia** "was a great word with the Greeks. With them the word included the ideas of cleverness and skill in handicraft and art, skill in matter of common life, sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom, learning, speculative wisdom, natural philosophy and mathematics" (Liddell and Scott). Trench says that sophia is recognized in the NT and in Christian writers as expressing the highest and noblest in wisdom. He says; "We may affirm with confidence that sophia is never in Scripture ascribed to other than God or good men, except in an ironical sense… For, indeed, if sophia includes the striving after the best ends as well as the using of the best means, is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense,… there can be no wisdom disjointed from goodness." Thayer says that when sophia is used of God, it refers to supreme intelligence such as belongs to God… Expositors says; "**Sophia** is the collective moral intelligence, 'insight into the true nature of things' (Lightfoot) and in the Pauline Epistles it is this intelligence in especial as knowledge of the divine plan of salvation long hidden and now revealed." (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

**Wisdom is the right use of knowledge:**
**All true spiritual wisdom is found only in Christ**

**Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** adds that "The biblical concept of **wisdom**, therefore, is quite different from the classical view of **wisdom**, which sought through philosophy and human rational thought to determine the mysteries of existence and the universe. The first principle of biblical **wisdom** is that people should humble themselves before God in reverence and worship, obedient to His commands. This idea is found especially in the **Wisdom** Literature: the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In the Old Testament, the best example of a "wise man" is King Solomon (1Ki 10:4,6, 7, 8). And yet the same book that heaps such lavish, warm, and glowing praise upon Solomon for his reputed wisdom (1Ki 4:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34) also points out how Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord (1Ki 11:1–13)." (Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

So clearly "spiritual wisdom" is no guarantee that one will walk worthy, but needs to be affect our heart decisions in order to be practical. How are you doing in this area? Or, are you like "wise" King Solomon, filled with "**spiritual wisdom**" and yet choosing to walk in a manner counter to God's clearly revealed will? Bible study won't do you much good unless it transforms your thinking and your walk. True spiritual wisdom must affect your daily life. Wisdom and practical intelligence must go together.

**James** writes that when we find ourselves in trials and are uncertain how to behave "if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (Jas 1:5+). God gives wisdom to those who ask Him, provided they are sincerely willing to obey Him (Jas 1:6+). It is amazing that the same spiritual wisdom which motivated Christ during His earthly ministry is available to Christians now.

Paul and Timothy are praying for "**wisdom**" for the Colossian saints, but it is not just any **wisdom** but that which is "**spiritual**." The **wisdom** in which the false teachers boasted had to do with "matters which have, to be sure, **the appearance of wisdom** in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of **no value** against fleshly indulgence" (Col 2:23+, cf Col 2:8+ Col 2:18+)

In other words their **wisdom** was for "show" and clearly had no redeeming value in regard to denying self and living a genuinely holy life.

True "spiritual wisdom" is in contrast to "fleshly wisdom" or wisdom pertaining to what is human or characteristic of human nature as Paul mentioned in (2 Cor 1:12)

**James** describes the most debased form of wisdom as that which is "earthly, natural, demonic" and is associated ungodly behavior such as "jealousy and selfish ambition… , disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy." (Jas 3:15-17+).

**Wiersbe -** Spiritual intelligence is the beginning of a successful, fruitful Christian life. God puts no premium on ignorance. I once heard a preacher say, "I didn't never go to school. I'm just a igerant Christian, and I'm glad I is!" A man does not have to go to school to gain spiritual intelligence; but neither should he magnify his "igerance." Great men of God like Charles Spurgeon, G. Campbell Morgan, and H. A. Ironside never had the privilege of formal Bible training. But they were devoted students of the Word, learning its deeper truths through hours of study, meditation, and prayer. The first step toward fullness of life is spiritual intelligence—growing in the will of God by knowing the Word of God.

Wisdom which is spiritual is spoken of again in this epistle in Colossians where Paul says "we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ." (Col 1:28-note).

Contrast the outcome of teaching with spiritual wisdom with that associated with the other types of wisdom mentioned above.

Again in (Col 3:16+) we see that "spiritual wisdom" is associated with letting "the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another."

In (Col 4:5-note) Paul brings out the practical aspect of "spiritual wisdom" exhorting the Colossians "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." The NLT phrases it "Live wisely among those who are not Christians and make the most of every opportunity."

In Deuteronomy, just before the children of Israel (who were to be "lights" to the lost Gentiles all around them) went into the promised land, Moses exhorted them to "keep and do them, (statutes & judgments - faithfully obey them) for that is your **wisdom** and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Dt 4:6) If the Israelites had walked in a manner worthy of the Mosaic Law, their behavior and lifestyle would have displayed their godly wisdom to the Gentiles all around. Unfortunately, not only did Israel for the most part not walk worthy, but they even behaved worse than the pagans around them!

The Hebrew idea of **wisdom** is the practical application of the knowledge of God's will to the multi-colored situations of real life. Wisdom then, in a sense, is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint and to respond accordingly. Paul did not want the Colossians to be filled with "head knowledge" but "**spiritual wisdom**" necessary for making decisions in light of eternity and thus living to please God. Beware when someone gives you a tape set of "deeper truths" for these will more often then not detour you from simply walking in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. Instead of getting burning hearts of devotion to Christ (Lk 24:32) these folks get big heads and can create big problems in a church body in a short time.

All Biblical truth is practical, not theoretical so that if we are growing in knowledge, we should also

"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18-note).

How is your spiritual "garden" growing?… **in** grace or **in**fested (with weeds of sin)!?

I like how someone described **wisdom** "Wisdom is the quality that keeps you from getting into situations where you need it.

In Knowing God, **J. I. Packer** wrote that "Wisdom is the power to see and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it."

**C H Spurgeon** once quipped that "The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance.

**Watson** - Wisdom is put for that prudence and discretion which enables a man to perceive that which is fit to be done, according to the circumstances of time, place, persons, manners, and end of doing (Wisdom - Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary)

**A W Tozer** reminds us that Jesus "is the fountain of all wisdom, but He is more—He is wisdom itself. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden away!"

**Charles Swindoll** has some wise advice about "wisdom" warning us not to "expect wisdom to come into your life like great chunks of rock on a conveyor belt. It isn't like that. It's not splashy and bold … nor is it dispensed like a prescription across a counter. Wisdom comes privately from God as a by-product of right decisions, godly reactions, and the application of spiritual principles to daily circumstances. Wisdom comes … not from trying to do great things for God … but more from being faithful to the small, obscure tasks few people ever see."

True wisdom consists principally of two parts: the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves! —John Calvin

**More resources on Wisdom**

- Torrey Topical Textbook Wisdom of God, the
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary Wisdom
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary Wisdom
- Charles Buck Dictionary Wisdom
- Easton's Bible Dictionary Wise, Wisdom
- Holman Bible Dictionary Wisdom and Wise Men
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible Wisdom
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Wisdom
- King James Dictionary Wisdom
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary Wisdom
- Vines' Expository Dictionary Wisdom
- Wilson's Bible Types Wisdom
- Webster Dictionary Wisdom
- Watson's Theological Dictionary Wisdom Wisdom (1)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia Wisdom of God
- The Jewish Encyclopedia Wisdom

**Some quotes on wisdom** (from Complete Gathered Gold - John Blanchard - excellent resource)...

> Knowledge leads us from the simple to the complex; wisdom leads us from the complex to the simple. - Anon.
>
> True wisdom is a divine revelation. - George Barlow
>
> Wisdom has never made a bigot, but learning has. - Josh Billings
>
> Wisdom gives a balance to character. - John Blanchard

Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. - John Calvin

This is our wisdom, to be learners to the end. - John Calvin

To search for wisdom apart from Christ means not simply foolhardiness but utter insanity. - John Calvin

True wisdom consists in being wise according to the law of God. - John Calvin

Wisdom is not the growth of human genius. It must be sought from above. - John Calvin

Wisdom and the will of God are intimately related... Nothing is more vital for practical knowledge of the purpose of God than wisdom. - Sinclair Ferguson

Knowledge is horizontal. Wisdom is vertical—it comes down from above. - Billy Graham

Heavenly wisdom is better than worldly wealth, and to be preferred before it. - Matthew Henry

It is better to get wisdom than gold. Gold is another's, wisdom is our own; gold is for the body and time, wisdom for the soul and eternity. - Matthew Henry

Modesty is the badge of wisdom. - Matthew Henry

Such is the degeneracy of human nature that there is no true wisdom to be found with any but those who are born again and who, through grace, partake of the divine nature. -Matthew Henry

He who has a constant longing for wisdom will persistently pray for it. - D. Edmond Hiebert

Surely the essence of wisdom is that before we begin to act at all, or attempt to please God, we should discover what it is that God has to say about the matter. - D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

Divine wisdom is "that attribute by which God arranges His purposes and His plans, and arranges the means which bring forth the results that He purposes." - D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

Wisdom opens the eyes both to the glories of heaven and to the hollowness of earth.J. A. Motyer

Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God's holiness and sovereignty... acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine wisdom become ours. - J. I. Packer

Wisdom is God-centred. - Michael Parsons

Wisdom in ruling is justice; wisdom in speech is discretion; wisdom in conduct is prudence; wisdom in evaluation is discernment. - George Seevers

To know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is the highest principle and perfection of man. This attainment, infinitely above all others, constitutes true wisdom. -Charles Simeon

We can be certain that God wants us to be wise, just as we are sure that he wants us not to sin. - R. C. Sproul

Conviction of ignorance is the doorstep to the temple of wisdom. - C. H. Spurgeon

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom." - C. H. Spurgeon

The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living which are to be desired when dying. - Jeremy Taylor

The wisest person in the world is the person who knows the most about God. - A. W. Tozer

Wisdom … is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means." - A. W. Tozer

The true test of wisdom is works, not words. - Curtis Vaughan

If the Lord Jesus Christ is a stranger to you, the best you can hope for is to become a philosopher, like Socrates of old. But apart from Christ there is no wisdom. - Spiros Zodhiates

Wisdom, the wisdom of God, is not something that is acquired by man, but something that is bestowed by God upon his elect. It is a divine endowment and not a human acquisition. - Spiros Zodhiates

# DEVOTIONALS ON WISDOM
# OUR DAILY BREAD

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**Wisdom from Above** -Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore, get wisdom; get understanding. Proverbs 4:7 = A series of cartoons in a New York newspaper depicted a young woman, garbed in cap and gown, holding a diploma with much pride. With her head held high she is looking down her nose at "Mr. World," while that cold, cruel cynic is saying, "Well, who do we have here?" Next, with shoulders thrown back, the young lady replies, "Certainly you know who I am. I'm Cecelia Shakespeare Doaks, a graduate of Prestige College. I have my A.B." "My dear child," Mr. World says in reply, "come with me, and I'll teach you the rest of the alphabet!" Now, we certainly would not discourage the quest for learning, nor the desire to pursue an education to meet the demands and opportunities of life — we would encourage it! But it's important to remember that there is more involved in a well-rounded education than the completion of some college courses. Four years of classroom instruction, even under the most competent teachers, doesn't make one all-wise. The "school of hard knocks" often makes a far greater impact than the "university of hard facts." Even with the best education and down-to-earth, practical experience, however, a man or woman really "knows" nothing apart from God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Pr 9:10). **Knowledge** is the acquisition of facts. **Wisdom** is the ability to use this knowledge rightly. A person may acquire much knowledge, but without wisdom his acquired storehouse of facts will do him little good; in fact, it may even be spiritually harmful to him. Get an education? Yes, but also seek for that wisdom which is from above. James tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God … and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good life [behavior] his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).

A man may store his mind with facts,
Till knowledge from it overflows,
But lacking wisdom from Above,
He's still a "fool" till Christ he knows.
—Bosch

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**Wise Counsel**

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. —Luke 2:52

Today's Scripture:Luke 2:46-52

I'll never forget Jake. His legs seemed too thin and spindly to hold him against the current of the river. His patched and discolored waders looked older than he was. His fishing vest was tattered and held together with safety pins; his ancient hat was battered and sweat-stained; his antiquated fly rod was scarred and taped.

I watched as he worked his way upstream to a patch of quiet water and began to cast. Then I took notice! He was fishing the same water I had fished earlier in the day and catching trout where I had caught none. Here was a man who could teach me a thing or two. All I had to do was ask.

We gain insight when we listen to those who have gone before and who know more than we do—insight we miss when our pride stands in the way. We're able to learn from others when we humble ourselves and acknowledge how little we know. Willingness to learn is a mark of those who are truly wise.

Consider our Lord as a young boy, "sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). Proverbs 1:5 says that "a wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel." Let's ask questions of those who've spent their lives seeking God's wisdom.By: David H. Roper

There's so much wisdom to be learned,
So many ways for me to grow,
Lord, I would listen like a child,
And learn what You would have me know. —K. De Haan

If you think you know everything, you have a lot to learn.

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**Wisdom's Call**

Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Proverbs 8:11

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 8:10–21

Malcolm Muggeridge, the noted British journalist and social critic, came to faith in Christ at the age of sixty. On his seventy-fifth birthday he offered twenty-five insightful observations about life. One said, “I never met a rich man who was happy, but I have only very occasionally met a poor man who did not want to become a rich man.”

Most of us would agree that money can’t make us happy, but we might like to have more so we can be sure.

King Solomon’s net worth has been estimated at more than two trillion US dollars. Although he was very wealthy, he knew that money had great limitations. Proverbs 8 is based on his experience and offers “Wisdom’s Call” to all people. “I raise my voice to all mankind. . . . My mouth speaks what is true” (vv. 4–7). “Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her” (vv. 10–11).

Wisdom says, “My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full” (vv. 19–21).

These are true riches indeed!

By: David C. McCasland

Lord, thank You for the riches of Your wisdom that guide our steps today.

God offers the true riches of wisdom to all who seek and follow Him.

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**Age-Old Wisdom**

Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding? Job 12:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Kings 12:1–7, 12–17

In 2010, a newspaper in Singapore published a special report that contained life lessons gleaned from eight senior citizens. It opened with these words: “While aging brings challenges to mind and body, it can also lead to an expansion in other realms. There is an abundance of emotional and social knowledge; qualities which scientists are beginning to define as wisdom . . . the wisdom of elders.”

Indeed, wise older people have much to teach us about life. But in the Bible, we meet a newly crowned king who failed to recognize this.

King Solomon had just died, and in 1 Kings 12:3, we read that “the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam” with a petition. They asked the new king to lighten the harsh labor and heavy taxes his father Solomon had demanded of them. In return, they would loyally serve Rehoboam.

At first the young king consulted the elders (v. 6). But he rejected their advice and accepted the foolish counsel of the young men who had grown up with him (v. 8). He made the burden on the people even greater! His rashness cost him most of his kingdom.

All of us need the counsel that comes with years of experience, especially from those who have walked with God and listened well to His counsel. Think of the accumulated wisdom God has given them! They have much to share with us about the Lord. Let’s seek them out and give a listening ear to their wisdom.

By: Poh Fang Chia

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**What We Want to Hear**

I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. 2 Chronicles 18:7

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 18:5–27

As human beings, we are prone to seek out information that supports the opinions we hold. Research shows that we’re actually twice as likely to look for information that supports our position. When we’re deeply committed to our own way of thinking, we avoid having that thinking challenged by opposing positions.

Such was the case in King Ahab’s rule over Israel. When he and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, discussed whether to go to war

against Ramoth Gilead, Ahab gathered 400 prophets—men he'd appointed to that role himself and would therefore tell him what he wanted to hear—to help them decide. Each replied he should go, saying "God will give it into the king's hand" (2 Chronicles 18:5). Jehoshaphat asked whether there was a prophet who had been chosen by God through whom they could inquire of the Lord. Ahab responded reluctantly because God's prophet, Micaiah, "never prophesies anything good about [him], but always bad" (v. 7). Indeed, Micaiah indicated they wouldn't be victorious, and the people would be "scattered on the hills" (v. 16).

In reading their story, I see how I too tend to avoid wise advice if it isn't what I want to hear. In Ahab's case, the result of listening to his "yes men"—400 prophets—was disastrous (v. 34). May we be willing to seek and listen to the voice of truth, God's words in the Bible, even when it contradicts our personal preferences.

By: Kirsten Holmberg

Lord, help me to seek and heed Your counsel even when it's against my desires or popular thought.

God's counsel is trustworthy and wise.

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**Growing Wise**

Give to Your servant an understanding heart. —1 Kings 3:9

Today's Scripture: 1 Kings 3:5-10

Solomon was a young man charged with the responsibility of governing one of the most prosperous kingdoms in the ancient Near East. Israel was a significant power then, her domain extending from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt. Responsible for so much, Solomon knew he needed help. So when God asked the young king what He could do for him, Solomon did not ask to be healthy or wealthy. He asked to be wise (1 Kings 3:9). This request pleased the Lord.

God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing, . . . I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart" (vv.11-12).

The word translated "understanding" in Solomon's request (v.9) actually means "hearing." God gave Solomon a hearing heart so he could judge the people, and "discern between good and evil."

Wise men and women hear God through His Book. They read other books, of course, but they judge them all by the Word of God. There is no greater wisdom.

If you want wisdom, ask God for it. The apostle James said, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). —DHR

By: David H. Roper

I scanned God's teachings thoughtlessly,
In haste I did not hear Him;
Then prayerfully I read once more,
This time my heart drew near Him. —Gustafson

God opens the door of His wisdom to those who open their Bibles.

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**Icebergs**

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. —Psalm 1:1

Today's Scripture:Psalm 1:1-6

To improve efficiency, a company hired a consultant, who called a meeting of all shop personnel. Stressing the need to listen to experts, he said, "Imagine you're on the Titanic, and it's sinking. You climb into a lifeboat. Which direction would you row?"

Then he asked, "What if you had the ship's navigator with you? Now which way would you go? You'd row the way the navigator told you to, right?"

There were murmurs of agreement until one fellow in the back piped up, "Well, I don't know. He's already hit one iceberg!"

The book of Proverbs urges us to get advice from the wise (1:2-7). Wisdom in the Bible is the "skill for living." The Hebrew word translated "wisdom" is the same word that's translated "skill" in reference to the detailed work of Bezalel and Aholiab in constructing

the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-11). God gave them and others skill for artwork, building, weaving, and carving.

Today, wise men and women have a valuable skill—"the skill for living." Don't take your lead from others until you take a look at their lives. If they have crashed into a lot of icebergs, they may cause your life to sink as well.

The "blessed" person delights in God's Word, "not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1-2). —HWR

By: Haddon W. Robinson

When you're in need of wisdom,
Be careful to whom you go;
Make certain they are godly,
And that God's Word they know. —Fitzhugh

Take your direction from those who follow God's Word.

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**Treasure Hunter**

Search for [wisdom] as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord. —Proverbs 2:4-5

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 2:1-9

Mel Fisher was a treasure hunter who searched for gold and found it. In 1985, after 16 years of looking, he finally discovered the Spanish wreck Nuestra Senora de Atocha in 55 feet of water near Key West, Florida. His divers salvaged millions of dollars' worth of treasure from that sunken ship—but it didn't come easy. They toiled long and hard with metal detectors, diving to investigate every metallic "hit." Fisher's dreams and work eventually paid off when he came upon his big find.

The Bible describes another kind of treasure as being more precious than gold, silver, or rubies (Prov. 3:14-15). It is wisdom, which is more than knowledge. It's the ability to apply that knowledge to everyday life. Solomon, who asked God for a wise and understanding heart, told us in Proverbs 2 to seek for wisdom with the same persistence and intensity as we would search for hidden treasures (v.4). We must cry out for discernment and understanding (v.3), incline our ear to wisdom (v.2), and receive God's words and treasure them in our heart (v.1).

Do we value wisdom? Do we seek it as diligently as if it were gold? If so, we will be rewarded with life's greatest treasure—the knowledge of God.

By: Mart DeHaan

What will it profit when life here is o'er,
Though great worldly wisdom I gain,
If seeking knowledge I utterly fail
The wisdom of God to obtain? —Nelson

You can gain much knowledge on your own, but true wisdom comes only from God.

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**Don't Be Deceived!**

May 28, 1999

Read: Proverbs 20:14-24 | Bible in a Year: 2 Chronicles 4-6; John 10:24-42

The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps. —Proverbs 14:15

Years ago, one of the largest gold dealers in the United States was caught in the act of claiming something that wasn't true. A court-appointed attorney obtained an order to open the company's vault to confirm a disputed claim that it contained $2 million worth of the precious metal. When the vault was opened, it appeared to hold a stack of gold bars. But a closer inspection revealed that it contained nothing more than 45 blocks of gold-painted wood. Many innocent investors lost a lot of money.

Our heavenly Father lovingly cautions us in His Word about people in this world who come up with deceptive ventures. The writer of Proverbs told us not to believe everything we hear when we buy or sell something (Prov. 20:14). He told us to seek knowledge, understanding, and good counsel in everything we do (v.18). And because we cannot begin to see as the Lord sees (v.24), we should pray for His wisdom in the decisions we must make. God sees through the lies of deception in a way that we never could. He can steer us clear of good-sounding bad values.

Sometimes we end up learning the hard way. But God cares enough to tell us the right way and to warn us to be careful.

Many seek and strive for wisdom
But find folly in disguise;
All too few seek first God's kingdom—
Only this can make them wise. —Anon.

When we know what's true we can discern what's false.

By Mart DeHaan

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**The Path Of Wisdom**

September 4, 1998

Read: Proverbs 4:10-27 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 143-145; 1 Corinthians 14:21-40

Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. —Proverbs 4:25

I had always heard that if a farmer keeps his eyes on a distant object while he’s plowing, he’ll make a straight furrow. So I tested the principle when I mowed my lawn. Sure enough, my first cut was a straight swath of new-mown turf.

If you can plow a straight furrow or mow in a straight line by keeping your eyes fixed on a distant object, surely the principle should also be true of life—especially if the object on which you fix your gaze is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That’s what the writer of the Proverbs says in chapter 4. In fact, the whole book of Proverbs is about following a straight path. It tells how to avoid the sexual trap (ch. 5-7), how to retain your integrity (12:1-16; 29:23), how to control your tongue (12:17-22; 21:23), how to get along with difficult people (14:7; 15:1), and how to stay healthy and live long (3:7-8,13-18). According to Proverbs, the wise person can walk the straight path and not be diverted.

But the Bible doesn’t just advise, “Be wise!” It introduces us to Jesus Christ. The truly important question is our relationship to Him. He didn’t just teach the truth; He is the truth (Jn. 14:6). So the only way to follow a straight path through life is to keep your eyes on Him.

I need His eye to guide me in the pathway,
For I am weak and helpless as a child;
And if without it I would take my journey,
My feet would stumble on the mountains wild. —Anon.

Our wisdom is folly unless we're following Christ.

By Dennis J. DeHaan

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**Information Isn't Wisdom**

September 12, 1998

Read: Proverbs 2:1-9 | Bible in a Year: Proverbs 13-15; 2 Corinthians 5

The Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. —Proverbs 2:6

Are there any limits to the knowledge we can acquire? With today’s amazing technology we are able to tap into incredible sources of information. Yet Bill Gates, visionary founder of Microsoft, claims that we are only on the threshold of far greater wonders. In his book The Road Ahead, Gates makes this prediction: “When tomorrow’s powerful information machines are connected on the highway . . . you’ll be able to stay in touch with anyone, anywhere, who wants to stay in touch with you; to browse through any of thousands of libraries day or night.”

Surely we are grateful for the technology that makes available such remarkable means of obtaining information. A mere accumulation of facts, though, doesn’t add up to insight and understanding. All the learning of philosophers, the speculations of ethicists, and the achievements of scientists can’t give us the truth about God and His will, His grace, or the good news concerning Jesus Christ and salvation from sin. For that knowledge, we need the Bible—and we always will.

So don’t squander your time merely acquiring facts. It’s far better to study the truth God has given us in His Word. Remember: “The

Lord gives wisdom" (Prov. 2:6).

Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came;
Mine to teach me what I am. —Burton

We can get information online, but wisdom comes from on high.

By Vernon Grounds

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**How Do You Know?**

November 10, 1998

Read: 2 Peter 1:1-21 | Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 48-49; Hebrews 7

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. —2 Peter 1:2

An early evening thunderstorm provided the setting for the most beautiful rainbow I had ever seen. But when I tried to describe it to my wife, I was thoroughly frustrated, for its beauty defied words. In an attempt to understand what I had observed, I read an article in the encyclopedia. The article increased my understanding, but it offered only cold facts. It didn't capture the rainbow's glory. Abstract knowledge about a rainbow is one thing; experiencing its beauty is another.

Two different kinds of knowledge are mentioned in 2 Peter 1. In verses 5 and 6 the author used a Greek word for knowledge that means the abstract information needed for spiritual growth. But in verses 2, 3, and 8, he used the Greek word that denotes a more complete, practical knowledge of Christ, which is actually the goal of such growth. These two terms differ in the same way that reading about a rainbow differs from seeing its beauty.

Job spoke of that distinction when after his testing he said to the Lord, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). As you increase your knowledge about God, pray that you may also grow in your experience and appreciation of Him.

We cannot say we know God's truth
Until we know the Lord;
But once our hearts are one with His,
We'll understand His Word. —Anon.

We need more than a head full of facts—we need a heart full of faith.

By Mart DeHaan

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**Foolish Knowledge**

July 13, 1997

Read: Proverbs 4:1-13 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 7-9; Acts 18

Professing to be wise, they became fools. —Romans 1:22

In the past few years, millions of people have discovered a fascinating new world of communication. By linking their computers to the electronic web known as the Internet, they now have at their fingertips vast resources of information and entertainment. No wonder Internet addicts are perhaps the fastest-growing segment of our culture.

But as we zoom into the Information Age, let's not lose our perspective. A glut of factual data and visual experiences doesn't guarantee an increase in wisdom.

A century ago, British poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson lamented, "Knowledge grows but wisdom lingers." The Bible highlights this crucial difference between mere knowledge and authentic wisdom. The book of Proverbs emphasizes that it's not enough to acquire information; we need to gain the understanding that is based on a healthy respect of the Lord (Prov. 1:7). The apostle Paul pointed out that some people are always learning, yet never coming to a grasp of truth that really matters (2 Tim. 3:7).

Information and technology can be wonderful tools. But don't get so caught up in gaining knowledge that you fail to put it to good use. Only the Book that tells us about Jesus Christ brings ultimate wisdom (Col. 2:3).

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O truth unchanged, unchanging,
O light of our dark sky. —How

Wisdom gives wings to knowledge.

By Vernon Grounds

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**Where Can Wisdom Be Found?**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. —James 1:5

Today's Scripture: James 3:13-17

Wisdom is the beauty of holiness. James says wisdom is reasonable; flexible; forgiving; peaceful; caring; given to friendly visits, small acts of courtesy, and kind words. It is humble, transparent, simple, gentle, and gracious to the core (James 3:17).

Where can wisdom be found? It comes from heaven (1:5). “Wisdom,” wrote Charles Spurgeon, “is a beauty of life that can only be produced by God’s workmanship in us.”

It’s good to ask from time to time: “Am I growing in wisdom?” After all, life is relentlessly dynamic. We’re either growing sweeter and wiser as the days go by, or we’re growing into foolish or even sour-faced curmudgeons. Into what are we growing?

It’s never too late to begin growing in wisdom. God loves us with an ardent, intense affection that can deliver us from our foolishness if we yield ourselves to Him. His love can make the most difficult nature into a miracle of astonishing beauty. It may hurt a little and it may take a while, but God relentlessly seeks our transformation. When we ask, His wisdom will begin to rise in us and pour itself out to others.

We have this promise: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to [you]” (1:5).

By: David H. Roper

Lord, please put an end to our foolishness and
turn our hearts toward the wisdom that comes
only from You. We ask You now to take our
lives and transform them into Your likeness.

True wisdom begins and ends with God.

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**Which Wisdom?**

October 20, 1997

Read: James 3:13-18 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 59-61; 2 Thessalonians 3

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield. —James 3:17

Is it wise to be bitterly envious of other people’s possessions, talents, or good looks? Is it wise to be selfishly ambitious—and then brag about what your ambition brings you?

A passage in the Bible actually seems to call such attitudes wise. James used the word wisdom to describe “bitter envy and self-seeking” (3:14-15). That’s surprising, because we normally equate wisdom with something good. But James used the word in a specific context. The source of this wisdom, he pointed out, is evil. It doesn’t come “from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.” It is the wisdom that leads to immoral decisions about how life should be lived.

This kind of “wisdom” is all around us. Bitter envy and selfish ambition threaten many of our institutions and destroy relationships. Society pays the price for this twisted thinking at all levels, for it always leads to “confusion and every evil thing” (v.16).

The prophet Isaiah said, “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes” (Isa. 5:21). As believers in Christ, we must pursue a higher wisdom—the wisdom that comes from God. It is pure, peaceable, and gentle. It is merciful and without hypocrisy (Jas. 3:17). Ask God for that kind of wisdom. Is there any doubt which wisdom is better?

The wisdom from above flies in the face
Of what the world holds in death's embrace;
Willing to yield, yet resolutely pure
And peaceable, God's wisdom will endure. —Gustafson

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. —Proverbs 16:25

By Dave Branon

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**The Smart House**

February 19, 1996

Read: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 25; Mark 1:23-45

Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established. —Proverbs 24:3

A group in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, is developing a “Smart House.” This computer-equipped home can be programmed to monitor the baby, make the coffee, start the shower, dim the lights, and turn on the music. It senses whether people are in a room and adjusts the heat and lights accordingly. If the vacuum cleaner is running when the doorbell or telephone rings, the computer automatically shuts it off.

Imagine owning a dream house like that! You could have a taste of the life of Solomon, who in his day had anything a person could want (Eccl. 2:10).

Remember, however, that when Solomon filled his life with luxuries, he also filled it with emptiness (v.11). When he lived for riches and comfort, he ran into the same kinds of problems that put For Sale signs in front of thousands of homes today. The wealthy who have forgotten the Lord are plagued by divorce, alcoholism, and depression.

But Solomon finally came to his senses (12:13-14). He came back to his own principles. He remembered that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that a real dream home is any house, no matter how big or small, that is built on the wisdom of God (Prov. 24:3).

Look away from earth's attractions,
All earth's joys will soon be o'er;
Rest not till thy heart exclaimeth:
"I have Christ! What want I more?" —Walker

Be smart—ask for God's wisdom.

By Mart DeHaan

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**Beyond Information**

August 1, 1996

Read: Proverbs 1:1-33 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 57-59; Romans 4

The Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come wisdom and understanding. —Proverbs 2:6

An investment company’s full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal began with these words: “Information is everywhere. Insight is all too rare. For insight goes beyond information to discern underlying truths.”

Today, we are long on information and short on insight. Television offers scores of channels. Encyclopedias and world atlases are on compact disks (CDs). Online databases give us the temperature in Hong Kong and the baseball score in Birmingham. We’re wired and tired from trying to grasp the meaning of all we know.

Years ago, a friend encouraged me to read a chapter from Proverbs each day. One chapter each day takes me through this marvelous book of God’s wisdom every month. “You can get knowledge in college,” my friend said, “but wisdom comes from God.”

Here’s what Almighty God promises when we seek His wisdom: “If you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, . . . then you will . . . find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:3-6).

One chapter of Proverbs every day. Try it this month and see how God's Word will give you the wisdom to transform information into insight.

THINKING IT THROUGH
Why would someone not want to be wise? (Prov. 1:7).
What happens to those who live foolishly? (vv.31-32).
What are some benefits of wisdom? (v.33; 2:6-11).

You can get knowledge in college, but wisdom comes from God.

By David C. McCasland

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**Gold Rush**

October 17, 1996

Read: Job 28:12-28 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 50-52; 1 Thessalonians 5

Where can wisdom be found? —Job 28:12

In the late 1970s, thousands of men and women rushed to the American West. In the tradition of the diehard prospectors of 1849, they dredged river bottoms and reopened gold fields long since abandoned. The activity, however, was not sparked by new finds. The same old metal had been there all the time. But because the value of gold had skyrocketed, the dust and flecks were now worth mining.

Suppose you knew that 100 pounds of pure gold could be found somewhere in the walls of your house? What you wouldn't do to find it!

Now let's change the stakes. What would we do if we knew that a large amount of wisdom was in our house? Well, it is! God tells us that nothing compares in value with the spiritual treasures contained in the Bible—not even gold at the highest prices (Job 28:12-17).

We would probably search everywhere in our house to find 100 pounds of gold. Yet, do we seek with as great a diligence the mind and will of God? As His followers, we should long to understand the fear of the Lord and to develop a hatred of evil—which the Bible says is true wisdom (v.28). And its value has never been higher. We need a new rush—not for gold, but for God!

More valuable than diamonds rare
Is priceless wisdom from above;
With purest gold it can't compare
Because it's filled with truth and love. —DJD

Wisdom is understanding what's really important.

By Mart DeHaan

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**In Honor Of Barking Dogs**

July 12, 1995

Read: Proverbs 1:7-9,20-33 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 4-6; Acts 17:16-34

[Wisdom cries out,] "Whoever listens to me will dwell safely." —Proverbs 1:33

In the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka, 15 soldiers of a government commando unit were saved by two dogs adopted as mascots. According to a news report, the soldiers were completing a 10-mile hike when their dogs sensed danger. Running ahead toward a water hole where the unit planned to rest, the dogs suddenly began barking and circling the area. The troops searched carefully and found 12 buried grenades attached to a taut wire trigger.

It's intriguing to think about those two jungle mascots whose senses were tuned to the smell of danger. The soldiers escaped serious injury and even death because they listened to those barking dogs.

It's disturbing to realize, however, that sometimes we are apt to give less credibility and attention to more faithful protectors. How many times have we resented a father's warnings or a mother's advice? How often have we grown tired of pastoral pleadings or a

fellow believer's caution?

Yet, how wise and loving is our God! He sends His messengers to whisper, to plead, and sometimes to howl about hidden dangers, which can do grave harm to our physical and spiritual lives.

Let's be wise and listen to the warnings.

Think About It
Do I resent being told what to do? Why? Who are some wise people I can learn from? When have I listened to someone's warning and avoided a problem?

If you want to be wise, listen to wise people.

By Mart DeHaan

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**Listen And Learn**

September 2, 1995

Read: Proverbs 16:16-23 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 137-139; 1 Corinthians 13

A wise man will hear and increase learning. —Proverbs 1:5

A person who read one of my articles in Our Daily Bread disagreed with something I said. So she wrote and asked for an explanation.

After receiving my letter, she responded, "Thank you for your answer. It was information that I didn't know. I just took for granted what I had learned in childhood. But it is a poor day when one doesn't learn something new—so at 84 I am still learning."

A willingness to learn is a mark of growth and wisdom. Proverbs 1:5 states, "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel." The Hebrew word for learning in this verse means "a taking in."

If we desire to grow in our knowledge of God and learn to please Him, we need not fear discarding old ideas and taking in new ones that more adequately explain the Scriptures. People who are seeking wisdom will welcome new ideas. They will test them by the truths of the Bible, either to confirm what they already believe or to enlarge their knowledge and understanding.

We must be open to God's truth as He teaches us through His Word and the people around us. Are we listening, testing, and learning?

Think About It
When was the last time you admitted you were wrong?
Why is it so hard to do? What have you learned
recently from another believer?

To make room for wisdom, get rid of pride.

By Dennis J. DeHaan

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**The Main Goal Of Life**

September 9, 1995

Read: John 17:1-5,22-26 | Bible in a Year: Proverbs 6-7; 2 Corinthians 2

Professing to be wise, they became fools. —Romans 1:22

In 1636, a group of Puritans founded Harvard University. Its motto was Christo et Ecclesiae, which means "For Christ and the Church." One of the school's guiding principles was this: "Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life. John 17:3."

That prestigious center of learning and culture has long since abandoned its original spiritual intent. Even many Harvard Divinity School faculty members now regard its Christ-centered goal as narrow-minded and outdated. In fact, not long ago a group of Harvard students staged a mock funeral procession through the Divinity School. They carried a coffin and proclaimed, "Our God, the Father, is dead."

Those students were as far from the truth as east is from west. The everlasting Father, who has created all life (including those who mock Him), is as immune to death as He is to sin.

Three hundred fifty years after the establishment of Harvard, the chief purpose of life is still and always will be, in the words of those colonial Puritans, “to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life.” Let us make that the main goal of our lives.

My heart's desire is to know You, Lord,
To walk close to You today;
To know Your grace, Your love, Your power,
For You are my life and my way. —Bierema

To know life's purpose, we must know life's Creator.

By Vernon Grounds

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**The Wisdom of Age**

March 10, 1994

Read: Exodus 18:13-27 | Bible in a Year: Deuteronomy 11-13; Mark 12:1-27

Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel. —Exodus 18:19

No matter how long you’ve been at this thing called life, it’s wise to turn to older people for advice. I know I feel more comfortable about making big decisions if I first talk to my dad and my father-in-law about them. When they confirm my fears or affirm my decisions about something, I feel I’m on solid ground.

Moses was no spring chicken when he got some much-needed advice from his father-in-law Jethro. He observed that Moses was about to suffer burnout if he continued to try to do all the work of judging for the children of Israel by himself. So he told Moses, “The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” (Ex. 18:18). Moses could easily have said, “Look, Dad, I’m in charge here. I know what I’m doing. After all, I’ve been around for a while, and I’ve gained a little wisdom too.” Instead, he listened carefully and divided the work just as Jethro suggested. As a result, things went more smoothly, and the work got done more efficiently.

In God’s design of things, He has provided for each of us a powerful, wise resource in the older people in our lives. Let’s never neglect their insight and good advice. We can learn from the wisdom of age.

The older saints who trust God’s Word
Have fought the battles you now fight;
They’ve trod the paths that you now walk—
Their wisdom teaches truth and right. —JDB

To avoid the mistakes of youth, draw from the wisdom of age.

By Dave Branon

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**Surprised by Wisdom**

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Romans 11:33

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Corinthians 1:18–25

“It seems like the older I get, the wiser you become. Sometimes when I talk to my son I even hear your words coming out of my mouth!”

My daughter’s candor made me laugh. I felt the same way about my parents and frequently found myself using their words as I raised my kids. Once I became a dad, my perspective on my parents’ wisdom changed. What I once “wrote off” as foolishness turned out to be far wiser than I had thought—I just couldn’t see it at first.

The Bible teaches that “the foolishness of God is wiser” than the cleverest human wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25). “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness” of the message of a suffering Savior to rescue “those who believe” (v. 21).

God always has ways of surprising us. Instead of the triumphant king the world would expect, the Son of God came as a suffering

servant and died a humbling death by crucifixion—before He was raised in unsurpassable glory.

In God's wisdom, humility is valued over pride and love shows its worth in undeserved mercy and kindness. Through the cross, our unconquerable Messiah became the ultimate victim—in order to "save completely" (Hebrews 7:25) all who place their faith in Him!

By: James Banks

When have God's ways left you confused? How does it help to know His ways are not our own?

Heavenly Father, I praise You for the wisdom of Your ways. Help me to trust You and walk humbly with You today.

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**Wisdom Seekers**

Blessed are those who find wisdom. —Proverbs 3:13 niv

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 3:1-18

Every spring colleges and universities hold commencement ceremonies to celebrate the success of students who have completed their studies and earned their degrees. After the students cross the stage, these graduates will enter a world that will challenge them. Just having academic knowledge won't be good enough. The key to success in life will be in wisely applying everything they have learned.

Throughout Scripture, wisdom is celebrated as a treasure that is worth seeking. It is better than riches (Prov. 3:13-18). Its source is God, who alone is perfectly wise (Rom. 16:27). And it is found in the actions and attitude of Jesus, in whom "all the treasures of wisdom" are found (Col. 2:3). Wisdom comes from reading and applying the Scripture. We have an example of this in the way Jesus applied His knowledge when He was tempted (Luke 4:1-13). In other words, the truly wise person tries to see life from God's point of view and chooses to live according to His wisdom.

What's the payoff for this kind of life? Proverbs tells us that wisdom is like sweetness of honey on the tongue (Prov. 24:13-14). "Blessed are those who find wisdom" (3:13 niv). So seek wisdom, for it is more profitable than silver or gold! By: Joe Stowell

Lord, strengthen my resolve to live by the wisdom that comes only from You. Give me the discernment to live all of life from Your point of view that I might know the blessings of a life lived wisely.

Blessing comes from seeking wisdom and living by it.

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**Candlelight Wisdom**

Read: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls. —2 Corinthians 12:15

While traveling in Finland, I appreciated the Finns' lavish use of candles. They never treat them as mere ornaments. Candles bring warmth and light into their homes during short winter days. The Finns know that a candle's purpose is missed unless it is burned. But candles should burn at one end only—a lesson I needed to learn.

When my husband and I began our missionary work, I longed to burn out for God. Within several years I had burned out all right, but not for God. Mine was a classic case of useless burnout, brought on by many self-caused stresses.

One night I hit rock bottom and discovered that the rock was Christ. As He began teaching me dependence on Him for all things, the candle of my life was relighted for His use.

I now see a difference between so-called "Christian burnout" and "burning out for God." Burnout stems from wastefully burning the candle of our lives at both ends—hardly wise for candles or Christians. Burning out for God means our lives are spent wisely in His service—an echo of Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 12:15. Once used up for God, we'll be raised up for heavenly service (Rev. 22:3). It is for this purpose we were made!

Thinking It Over
What are you doing to serve God?
Do you rely on His strength or your own?
Ask God to help you depend on Him in everything.

What's important is not how much we do for God, but how much God does through us.

By Joanie Yoder

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**Accidental Wisdom**

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Today's Scripture & Insight: Philippians 4:4–9

A few years ago, a woman shared with me a story about finding her preteen son watching news coverage of a violent event. Instinctively, she reached for the remote and changed the channel. “You don’t need to be watching that stuff,” she told him rather abruptly. An argument followed, and eventually she shared that he needed to fill his mind with “whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely . . .” (Philippians 4:8). After dinner, she and her husband were watching the news when suddenly their five-year-old daughter burst in and turned off the television. “You don’t need to be watching that stuff,” she declared in her best “mom” voice. “Now, think about those Bible things!”

As adults, we can better absorb and process the news than our children. Still, the couple’s daughter was both amusing and wise when she echoed her mother’s earlier instructions. Even well-adjusted adults can be affected by a steady diet of the darker side of life. Meditating on the kind of things Paul lists in Philippians 4:8 is a powerful antidote to the gloom that sometimes settles on us as we see the condition of our world.

Making careful decisions about what fills our minds is an excellent way to honor God and guard our hearts as well.

By: Randy Kilgore

Father, open our eyes today to what’s beautiful. Teach us to meditate on You.

What we let into our minds shapes the state of our souls.

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**Wisdom From Above**

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. —James 3:17

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-10

If Kiera Wilmot had performed her experiment during her high school science class, it might have earned her an A. But instead she was charged with causing an explosion. Although she had planned to have her teacher approve the experiment, her classmates persuaded her to perform it outside the classroom. When she mixed chemicals inside a plastic bottle, it exploded and she unintentionally unsettled some fellow students.

The Old Testament tells the story of another case of peer pressure. David and his men were hiding from Saul in a cave when Saul entered (1 Sam. 24). David’s companions suggested that God had delivered Saul to them, and they urged David to kill him (vv.4,10). If David killed Saul, they thought they could stop hiding and David could become king. But David refused to harm Saul because he was “the Lord’s anointed” (v.6).

People in our lives may sometimes suggest we do what seems most gratifying or practical in the moment. But there is a difference between worldly and spiritual wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Wisdom from above “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy” (James 3:17). When others are urging us to take a certain course of action, we can invite God to influence our response.

By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Hold o’er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me. —Pollard

One is truly wise who gains his wisdom from above.

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**Wisdom’s Call**

Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Proverbs 8:11

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 8:10–21

Malcolm Muggeridge, the noted British journalist and social critic, came to faith in Christ at the age of sixty. On his seventy-fifth birthday he offered twenty-five insightful observations about life. One said, “I never met a rich man who was happy, but I have only very occasionally met a poor man who did not want to become a rich man.”

Most of us would agree that money can’t make us happy, but we might like to have more so we can be sure.

King Solomon’s net worth has been estimated at more than two trillion US dollars. Although he was very wealthy, he knew that money had great limitations. Proverbs 8 is based on his experience and offers “Wisdom’s Call” to all people. “I raise my voice to all mankind. . . . My mouth speaks what is true” (vv. 4–7). “Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her” (vv. 10–11).

Wisdom says, “My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full” (vv. 19–21).

These are true riches indeed!

By: David C. McCasland

Lord, thank You for the riches of Your wisdom that guide our steps today.

God offers the true riches of wisdom to all who seek and follow Him.

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**Magic-Marker Wisdom**

The days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise. —Ephesians 5:16-17

Today's Scripture:Ephesians 5:8-21

A patient checked in to a Florida hospital for a life-saving amputation. He awoke to find that the wrong foot had been removed. In the same hospital, another patient had surgery on the wrong knee.

Defenders of the healthcare system point out that such tragic cases of malpractice are like airline crashes—they are newsworthy because they are so rare. In that Florida hospital, officials responded with a plan to avoid what could go wrong: Staffers now write “NO” with a black Magic Marker on the healthy limb.

The Bible also urges that we do more than just recognize our past wrongs; we must take decisive steps to avoid evil. Paul warned the believers in Ephesus to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11). Christ has delivered us from condemnation, but we still risk temporary harm and loss because of our sinful tendencies. Our flesh still inclines us toward error and danger (Gal. 5:16-17).

But much has changed. Our relationship with God has changed. Our once hopeless future is now bright with promise. We have the opportunity to submit to His Spirit and to walk with the One who does good rather than thoughtless harm.

By: Mart DeHaan

Thinking It Over
What conflict is described in Romans 7:15-25?
How may we win that battle? (Romans 8:12-13).
What happens when we are led by the Spirit? (vv.14-17).

Wise people don’t just admit wrongs, they strive to avoid a repeat performance.

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**Wandering From Wisdom**

Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. —1 Kings 3:9

Today's Scripture: 1 Kings 3:4-14

If God offered you anything you wanted, what would you ask for?

When Solomon was given that choice, he asked for the wisdom to discern good from evil so that he might lead God’s people well (1 Kings 3:9). “Because you have asked this thing,” God told Solomon, “I have done according to your words.” He even promised to

give him “both riches and honor” (vv.11-13). To this day, Solomon is remembered for the great wisdom God gave him.

Solomon began his rule with devotion to wisdom and a deep ambition to build a magnificent temple to honor God. But something happened along the way. His passion for living by God’s wisdom was displaced by the allures of the wealth and position God had given him. His marriage to foreign women who worshiped pagan gods eventually led him—and ultimately the nation—into idolatry.

The lesson is clear. Keeping our love for Christ and His wisdom preeminent is a primary objective for those of us who want to live to satisfy God throughout the course of our life. A commitment to following the riches of God’s wisdom will enable us to avoid the drift that destroyed Solomon.

Keep your heart in tune with God’s wisdom and obey His voice. That’s the way to finish well.

By: Joe Stowell

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above. —Robinson

Monitor your heart daily to avoid wandering from God’s wisdom.

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**Is There Wi-Fi?**

A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash. Proverbs 15:14 nlt

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 15:9–21

As I was preparing to go on a mission trip with some young people, the most frequently asked question was, “Is there Wi-Fi?” And I assured them there would be. So just imagine the wails and groans one night when the Wi-Fi was down!

Many of us become anxious when we’re separated from our smartphones. And when we do have our iPhones or Androids in our hands, we can be fixated on our screens.

Like many things, the internet and all that it allows us to access can become either a distraction or a blessing. It depends on what we do with it. In Proverbs we read, “A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash” (15:14 nlt).

Applying the wisdom of God’s Word to life, we can ask ourselves: Do we check our social networks compulsively throughout the day? What does that say about the things we hunger for? And do the things we read or view online encourage sensible living (vv. 16–21), or are we feeding on trash—gossip, slander, materialism, or sexual impurity?

As we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit, we can fill our minds with things that are “true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable” (Philippians 4:8 nlt). By God’s wisdom we can make good choices that honor Him.

By: Poh Fang Chia

God, help me to use my time well and to fill my mind with what is pure.

Read Being Jesus Online at discoveryseries.org/q0737.

What we let into our minds shapes the state of our souls.

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**Flyleaf Wisdom**

He who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. —Psalm 32:10

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-23

All right, Mary, I confess. While I was a guest at your home in Manila, I used your Bible one day for my devotions. When I opened it, I saw these words written on the flyleaf: Acknowledgment. Acceptance. Adjustment.

Those words express the steps that believers in Christ need to take when they receive bad news. I see these actions illustrated in the life of David.

Acknowledgment. When David was confronted by Nathan about his sin, he admitted his guilt (2 Samuel 12:13). When we are faced with a problem, whether it’s the result of our sin or not, it’s futile to run from the truth.

Acceptance. When his infant son died as punishment for his sin with Bathsheba, David accepted it as God's will (vv.19-23) and learned from it. We too need to see difficulties as opportunities to trust God and to grow spiritually (James 1:2-4).

Adjustment. David turned to the Lord for forgiveness and help, and he later wrote about what he had learned (Psalm 32). For us, we may need to ask the Lord for the ability to make a lifestyle change or to take some specific action.

Have you been hit hard by bad news? These steps from Mary's Bible can help you to handle it in a way that will please the Lord and result in good.

By: David C. Egner

Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear. —Berg

God takes us into His darkroom to develop our character.

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**Wise Behavior**

David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. . . . And he was accepted in the sight of all the people. —1 Samuel 18:5

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 18:1-5

Four times in 1 Samuel 18, the writer tells us that David "behaved wisely" (vv.5,14,15,30). In fact, he behaved "more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed" (v.30).

The phrase "highly esteemed" suggests an unusual respect. David was honored by all the people, but more significantly he was highly respected by those in Saul's court who were impressed by his noble character.

As Christians come to know Jesus through obedience to His Word, they will begin to display qualities of character that set them apart from others, for true wisdom is to live like Christ. It is more than common sense; it is uncommon behavior.

James said, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). This gracious way of making our way through the world can come only "from above."

David's experience can be our experience. God's promise to him is also true for believers today. He said, "I will instruct you [cause you to be wise] and teach you in the way you should go" (Psalm 32:8).

Are we learning to behave wisely?

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**Working Wisely**

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. —John 9:4

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-11

In a photo on my wall, a rusted rake leans against a post in a vegetable garden overgrown with weeds. I took the picture several months after my father-in-law died and there was no one to care for his usually well-tended garden. One afternoon, he had leaned his rake against a post, walked to the house, and never returned.

The photo says two things to me about work: First, I must do it while I can. Second, I must keep it in perspective and not make it more important than it is. Because my days are numbered, I need God's wisdom to spend each one as I should.

When Jesus healed a man born blind, He told His disciples, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4-5).

As Jesus labored in His Father's "garden" on earth, He demonstrated how to work wisely by having a balance between work and rest. He never valued productivity more than prayer, and He never became so preoccupied with a program that He failed to help people in need.

Lord, give us the wisdom to work faithfully while it is still day.

By:  David C. McCasland

Lord, help me know from day to day
The good I should pursue;
And grant me wisdom to discern
The things I should not do. —D. De Haan

Work is a blessing when it blesses others.

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**The Wise Old Owl**

He who restrains his lips is wise. — Proverbs 10:19

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 10:17-21

Years ago an anonymous writer penned a short poem about the merits of measuring our words.

A wise old owl sat in an oak;

The more he saw the less he spoke;

The less he spoke the more he heard;

Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?

There is a connection between wisdom and limiting what we say. Proverbs 10:19 says, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise."

We are wise to be careful about what we say or how much we say in certain situations. It makes sense to guard our words when we are angry. James urged his fellow believers, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Restraining our words can also show reverence for God. Solomon said, "God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few" (Eccl. 5:2). When others are grieving, our silent presence may help more than abundant expressions of sympathy: "No one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great" (Job 2:13).

Although there is a time to be quiet and a time to speak (Eccl. 3:7), choosing to speak less allows us to hear more.

By:  Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Dear Lord, please grant me wisdom to
know when to speak and when to listen.
I want to encourage others and to care
for them as You have cared for me.

Let your speech be better than silence; otherwise be silent.

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**Word Search**

Happy is the man who finds wisdom. —Proverbs 3:13

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 3:13-18

Emily loved the New York Times crossword puzzles. Her boyfriend Bill wanted a unique way to propose to her. So he enlisted the help of crossword composer Will Short.

On the appointed day, Bill took Emily to breakfast. He read the sports section while she started filling in her puzzle. Soon she began to notice some amazing "coincidences."

"Bill," she said, "My name is in here." Then, "Your name is in here too!" Soon phrases like "a modest proposal" and "Will you marry me?" emerged. Emily looked at Bill in astonishment. And she said yes.

The Bible may seem like a puzzle to us. We struggle through it, hoping to find wisdom for life's questions. Solomon understood that struggle. But he knew the search for wisdom was well worth it. He wrote, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her" (Prov. 3:13-15).

In the Bible, God talks to us—and about us. Persistent, prayerful study produces great personal rewards. So take time to search the Word. You'll discover the treasures of God's wisdom.

By: Haddon W. Robinson

Search the Scripture's precious store
As a miner digs for ore;
Search, and you will surely find
Treasures to enrich your mind. —Anon.

When we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves more clearly.

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**Wisdom For Witnessing**

The woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" —John 4:9

Today's Scripture: John 4:5-26

We can learn a lot about effective witnessing by examining our Lord's encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:5-26). He broke all social protocol by talking to this Samaritan woman. And asking her for a drink of water was a compliment of sorts. Later, He had a perfect opportunity to condemn her sinful lifestyle, but He didn't.

Author Paul Little points out that unlike Jesus we are quick to condemn. He writes, "Often we have the mistaken idea that if we don't condemn a certain attitude or deed, we will be condoning it." He adds, "Not only must we avoid condemning people, we need to learn the art of legitimate compliment."

He then related an encounter that writer Charles Trumbull once had on a train. A profanity-spewing, drunken man boarded and lurched into the seat next to him. When the man offered him a drink from his flask, Trumbull didn't condemn his condition. Instead he replied, "No thank you, but I can see you are a very generous man." The man's eyes lit up. As they talked, he heard about the One who offers the satisfying water of life. Later, he gave his life to Christ.

When you share your faith, remember the effectiveness of giving a compliment and avoiding condemnation.

By: Joanie Yoder

Lord, help us show compassion
To a world that's lost in sin,
So when we share the gospel,
Hungry souls for Christ we'll win. —Sper

Loving the lost is the first step in leading them to Christ.

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**Working off Bad Information**

Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. Proverbs 23:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 23:9–12

On a recent trip to New York City, my wife and I wanted to brave a snowy evening and hire a taxi for a three-mile ride from our hotel to a Cuban restaurant. After entering the details into the taxi service's app, I gulped hard when the screen revealed the price for our short jaunt: $1,547.26. After recovering from the shock, I realized I had mistakenly requested a ride to our home—several hundred miles away!

If you're working with the wrong information, you're going to end up with disastrous results. Always. This is why Proverbs encourages us to "apply [our] heart to instruction and [our] ears to words of knowledge"—God's wisdom (Proverbs 23:12). If we instead seek advice from those who are foolish, those who pretend to know more than they do and who have turned their back on God, we'll be in trouble. They "scorn . . . prudent words" and can lead us astray with unhelpful, misguided, or even deceptive advice (v. 9).

Instead, we can bend our "ears to words of knowledge" (v. 12). We can open our heart and receive God's liberating instruction, words of clarity and hope. When we listen to those who know the deep ways of God, they help us receive and follow divine wisdom. And God's wisdom will never lead us astray but always encourages and leads us toward life and wholeness.

By:  Winn Collier

God, bend my ears and heart toward wisdom. Help me be open to Your truth and push away every kind of foolishness.

A fool's wisdom always leads to a dead end, but God's wisdom always opens up new horizons.

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**Blue Lines**

I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. Proverbs 4:11

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 4:10–27

Downhill skiing racecourses are often marked by swaths of blue paint sprayed across the white, snowy surface. The crude arcs might be a visual distraction for spectators but prove to be vital to both the success and safety of the competitors. The paint serves as a guide for the racers to visualize the fastest line to the bottom of the hill. Additionally, the contrast of the paint against the snow offers racers depth perception, which is critical to their safety when traveling at such high rates of speed.

Solomon begs his sons to seek wisdom in hopes of keeping them safe on the racecourse of life. Like the blue lines, wisdom, he says, will "lead [them] along straight paths" and keep them from stumbling (Proverbs 4:11–12). His deepest hope as a father is for his sons to enjoy a rich life, free from the damaging effects of living apart from the wisdom of God.

God, as our loving Father, offers us "blue-line" guidance in the Bible. While He's given us the freedom to "ski" wherever we like, the wisdom He offers in the Scriptures, like racecourse markers, are "life to those who find them" (v. 22). When we turn from evil and walk instead with Him, our path will be lit with His righteousness, keeping our feet from stumbling and guiding us onward each day (vv. 12, 18).

By:  Kirsten Holmberg

How has reflecting on the wisdom of God kept you from stumbling? In what ways are you becoming more like Jesus?

God, thank You for Your Word. Help me to hold fast to the wisdom You offer. To learn more about how to get the most out of your Bible study time, visit christianuniversity.org/SF106.

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**Web Wisdom**

A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.  —Proverbs 26:21

Today's Scripture & Insight: Proverbs 26:1-12

Scroll to the bottom of many online news sites and you'll find the "Comments" section where readers can leave their observations. Even the most reputable sites have no shortage of rude rants, uninformed insults, and name-calling.

The book of Proverbs was collected about 3,000 years ago, but its timeless wisdom is as up-to-date as today's breaking news. Two proverbs in chapter 26 seem at first glance to contradict each other, yet they apply perfectly to social media. "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him" (v. 4). And then, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes" (v. 5).

The balance in those statements is in the "according to": Don't answer in the way a fool would answer. But respond so that foolishness is not considered wisdom.

My problem is that the foolishness I encounter is often my own. I have at times posted a sarcastic comment or turned someone else's statement back on them. God hates it when I treat my fellow human beings with such disrespect, even when they're also being foolish.

God gives us an amazing range of freedoms. We are free to choose what we will say, and when and how we say it. And we are always free to ask Him for wisdom.

By:  Tim Gustafson

Things to keep in mind: Is what I am saying true, and is it loving? What is my motivation? Will it help anyone? Will this reflect the character of Jesus?

Leave your thoughts about this topic.

Let love be your highest goal.

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**Higher Wisdom**

The message of the cross . . . to us who are being saved . . . is the power of God. —1 Corinthians 1:18

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

How difficult it is for some highly intelligent people to admit that in their own wisdom they can't answer life's ultimate questions.

The well-known astrophysicist Fred Hoyle said: "A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature." Yet he remains an unbeliever.

The late Carl Sagan spoke of "some kind of force or power" that enabled the universe to create itself. But he was "opposed to any kind of revealed religion."

The majority of us as Christians may feel unqualified to debate such intellectual giants. But it's not God's purpose to refute human wisdom with intellectual arguments. Instead, He confounds human wisdom and power by displaying His greater wisdom and power. He does this by saving ordinary people like you and me through the "message of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1:18). The truth that Jesus died for our sins and rose again is viewed as foolishness by the world.

God's best evidence to refute worldly wisdom is a transformed life. What a privilege to bear this message! What a challenge to live it!

By: Herbert Vander Lugt

No wisdom gained through arduous quest
Can set a sinner free,
But God in wisdom sent His Son
To die for you and me. —D. De Haan

True wisdom begins and ends with God.

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**Subtle Wisdom**

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. —John 12:26

Today's Scripture: Mark 8:34-38

When I was in college, my co-worker Bud, a fork-truck driver, often enriched my life with his pithy wisdom. We were eating lunch one day, sitting on the back of his fork truck, when I announced that I was transferring to another school.

"Why?" he asked.

"All my friends are transferring," I answered.

Bud chewed his sandwich for a moment and then replied quietly and with subtle irony, "I guess that's one way to pick a school."

His words struck me with rare force. Of course, I thought. But is this the only way to choose a school? Will I follow my friends for the rest of my days, or will I follow Jesus? Will I seek His face and His will and go where He wants me to go?

Twenty-five times in the New Testament, Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me." In Mark 8:34, He said, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." No matter what others do or what direction their lives may take, we must do what He asks us to do.

The words of an old song come to mind: "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness; all I have to do is follow!"

By: David H. Roper

As I walk along life's pathway, Though the way I cannot see, I shall follow in Christ's footsteps, For He has a plan for me. —Thiesen

To find your way through life, follow Jesus.

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**The Slowness Of Wisdom**

Whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak. —John 12:50

Today's Scripture: John 8:1-11

When the Pharisees came to Jesus with the woman caught in adultery and asked Him what should be done with her, He knelt for a moment and scribbled in the sand (John 8:6-11). We have no idea what He wrote. But when they continued asking Him, Jesus responded in one short sentence: “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first” (v.7). His few words accomplished much in confronting the Pharisees with their own sin, for they walked away one by one. Even today those words resound around the world.

Jesus had such a closeness to and dependence on His Father that He said of Himself, “Whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak” (12:50). Oh, that we had such a relationship with our Father that we knew how to respond with His wisdom!

Perhaps it begins with obeying James’ challenge to be “swift to hear, slow to speak” (1:19). This is not the slowness of ignorance, emptiness, timidity, guilt, or shame. But the slowness of wisdom born of dwelling quietly on the Lord and His thoughts.

We’re often told to stop and think before we speak. But I think we should take it much further and live a life where we’re always listening for God’s wisdom.

By: David H. Roper

Lord, grant that we may hear You speak;
For truth within our hearts we seek;
For unto Christ we would be true
And know what He Himself would do. —D. De Haan

Listen to God before you speak for God.

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**The Wisdom Of Ants**

Read: Proverbs 30:24-28 | Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 32-33; Hebrews 1

The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer. —Proverbs 30:25

We tend to take our lead from the great characters and personalities of the world. But the ancient wise man Agur pointed us in another direction. In Proverbs 30, he chronicled the virtues of the low things around us: the ants, badgers, locusts, and lizards (vv.24-28).

“The ants are a people not strong,” Agur told us, “yet they prepare their food in the summer” (v.25). Ants know instinctively that winter is coming, so they take advantage of the warmer weather. They attend picnics. While you’re wolfing down a hot dog and a soft drink, they’re marching off with the potato chips. They will store them, and when the snows come, they will have enough food.

For us, the first step in “preparing for winter” is to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. “Now is the day of salvation,” we are warned (2 Cor. 6:2). If we’ve already done that, as believers in Christ we have much work to do. If we display the “wisdom of ants,” we’ll prepare for “winter.” We can equip ourselves for difficult times by storing up God’s Word in our heart. Then, when we face the blizzards of life, we’ll know right where to find food for our spirit.

Next time you see an ant, remember: Winter is coming! The best time to prepare for tomorrow is today.

The humble ant’s keen industry
Can teach us all a lesson,
If in nature we will see
God’s classroom is in session. —Gustafson

The time to prepare for tomorrow is today.

By Haddon W. Robinson

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**The Wisdom In God's Word**

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? . . . Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. — 1 Corinthians 1:20

Today's Scripture: Proverbs 8:12-21

We treasure Scripture. It's God's inspired Word, and it teaches us the way to abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come. Indeed, it is the source of a wisdom that goes beyond that of the wisest philosophers (1 Corinthians 1:20). But this fact is rarely acknowledged in our culture.

So I was glad to read an article by The New York Times columnist David Brooks extolling biblical wisdom. He praised Martin Luther King Jr. for insight into human nature derived from Scripture. He felt that King "had a more accurate view of political realities than his more secular liberal allies because he could draw on biblical wisdom about human nature. Religion didn't just make civil rights leaders stronger—it made them smarter." And Brooks said further: "Biblical wisdom is deeper and more accurate than the wisdom offered by the secular social sciences."

Are we drawing on that source of wisdom in our own lives? We need Scripture's wisdom to deal with our personal problems and political issues. If we study and obey the Bible, we will be able to humbly testify with the psalmist, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation" (Psalm 119:99).

By: Vernon Grounds

The Bible is God's Word to us,
Still fresh through all the ages;
And if we read it we will find
God's wisdom on its pages. —Sper

One truth from the Bible is worth more than all the wisdom of man.

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**Wisdom's Source**

Give your servant a discerning heart. 1 Kings 3:9

Today's Scripture: 1 Kings 3:16–28

A man filed a lawsuit against a woman, claiming she had his dog. In court, the woman said her dog couldn't be his and told the judge where she had purchased it. The real owner's identity was revealed when the judge released the animal in the courtroom. Tail wagging, it immediately ran to the man!

Solomon, a judge in ancient Israel needed to settle a somewhat similar issue. Two women each claimed to be the mother of the same baby boy. After considering both arguments, he requested a sword to divide the infant in half. The real mother begged Solomon to give the baby to the other woman, choosing to save her son's life even if she could not have him (1 Kings 3:26). Solomon gave the baby to her.

Wisdom is necessary as we decide what's fair and moral, right and wrong. If we truly value wisdom, we can ask God for a discerning heart, like Solomon did (v. 9). God may answer our request by helping us balance our needs and desires with the interests of others. He may also help us weigh short-term benefits against long-term (sometimes eternal) gains so we can honor Him in how we live.

Our God is not only a perfectly wise judge, but He is also a personal counselor who is willing to give us godly wisdom in great amounts (James 1:5).

By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt

I worship You, God, as the true source of wisdom. Please show me how to make choices that bring honor to Your name.

Need wisdom? Seek it from the Source who alone can provide it—God.

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**Are You Searching for Wisdom?**

June 14, 1994

Read: Proverbs 10:1-17 | Bible in a Year: Ezra 9-10; Acts 1

For the Lord gives wisdom. —Proverbs 2:6

Often we hear people question the wisdom of those in authority over us. It's easy to point an accusing finger at government officials, bosses, pastors, teachers, or board members and say they are unfit to lead.

In reality, though, we're focusing our attention in the wrong place. Instead of being critical of others, we need to make sure wisdom is present in our own lives.

But how do we get such wisdom? First we need a "fear of the Lord" and a "knowledge of the Holy One" (Prov. 9:10). The best way to acquire this knowledge is by reading God's Word.

We must also ask the Lord for His help if we are to gain wisdom. James wrote, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God" (1:5). Just as Solomon asked God for wisdom to help him lead (1 Ki. 3:9), so we must constantly rely on Him if we are to walk a godly path.

Proverbs 10 tells us that when we are wise we will bring joy to our parents (v.1), we will work in a timely manner (v.5), and we will know how to accept authority (v.8).

The next time you're tempted to criticize someone, think twice. Ask God to help you examine your own heart. Then ask yourself, "Am I searching for the wisdom God's Word promises?"

Give to me Your insight, Lord,
As I read Your Word today,
So I'll truly understand
Your message and Your way. —Monroe

When we are busy seeking wisdom, we'll be too busy to find fault with others.

By Dave Branon

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**A Little Foolish**

September 24, 1994

Read: Ecclesiastes 10:1-15 | Bible in a Year: Song of Solomon 4-5; Galatians 3

I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. —Ecclesiastes 2:13

It was a clearcut case of arson. The perpetrator had torched his own home. But he would never be brought to justice. Why? The criminal was a jackdaw, a member of the crow family. He had picked up a red-hot cigarette and dropped the "prize" into his nest.

The jackdaw's name comes from an old English word used to ridicule foolish, thievish, and overly talkative people. The bird lives up to its reputation. On the ground, it struts about with a swagger; in flight, it has a flair for showy aerial displays. And at roosting time, the jackdaw loves being part of the noisy crowd.

Some of the most enjoyable people have a similar zest for life. Their love of a practical joke and a good laugh makes them the highlight of any party. But, like the jackdaw, these happy-go-lucky individuals can come up short on discernment. They can "start fires" of irritation in their own homes by being foolish rather than sensitive to the feelings of others.

Let's learn from the freewheeling jackdaw and from the author of Ecclesiastes (2:13). Although fun and games have their place, a joke is never funny when it comes at another's expense. Be careful to distinguish between refreshing fun and insensitive foolishness.

It's good to smile, to laugh, to play,
For joy-filled hearts drive clouds away;
But foolish ways and thoughtless fun
Can lead to sin and hide the sun. —Anon.

A wise man is like a pin: his head keeps him from going too far.

By Mart DeHaan